

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) which has been prepared to evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision (Placer County 2004), located in the jurisdiction of unincorporated Placer County.

The Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision (Greenway Vision) is a policy and project recommendation document that provides guidance and direction for the future design, implementation, and management of the Dry Creek Greenway within Placer County, the City of Roseville, the City of Rocklin, and the Town of Loomis. The Greenway Vision identifies shared common visions among these four jurisdictions that pertain to the stewardship and management of resources along Dry Creek and its tributaries.

The cities of Roseville and Rocklin, and the Town of Loomis are not expected to adopt the Greenway Vision and will not be subject to the mitigation measures of this EIR. Specific projects (as recommended or proposed by the Greenway Vision or through other plans) within these jurisdictions will require independent environmental review from these jurisdictions. This Draft EIR analyzes the environmental impacts of Greenway Vision project components located only in the unincorporated areas of the County of Placer. However, information regarding broader Greenway resources and proposed components located within the remainder of the watershed, including Roseville, Rocklin, and Loomis, is presented for information and guidance.

The Greenway Vision was developed with participation from the County of Placer, the cities of Roseville and Rocklin, the Town of Loomis, and representatives of many local and regional organizations with an interest in the resources within the Dry Creek watershed. The four government jurisdictions that the Greenway is located in each have their own General Plan, community plans, specific plans, and ordinances that reflect local values, issues, availability of resources, and land use priorities. The Greenway Vision is not intended to replace or nullify any of these plans, ordinances, and priorities. It is intended to provide a common framework within which each of the local jurisdictions may work collaboratively to accomplish the regional protection and enhancement of Greenway resources in a manner that is responsive to the local community needs and priorities. As such, the Greenway is intended for consideration and adoption by the County of Placer, and will serve as an advisory and informational document for the cities of Roseville and Rocklin, and the Town of Loomis.

1.1 Purpose and Intended Uses of the Environmental Impact Report

This Draft EIR has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as amended (Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq.), the procedures for the implementation of CEQA set forth in the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] Section 15000 et seq.), and Placer County's Environmental Review ordinance to address the environmental effects associated with the proposed Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision within unincorporated Placer County. Placer County is the Lead Agency for the purposes of preparing this Draft EIR under Section 15051 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The CEQA Guidelines describe several types of EIRs, with the type to be used dependent upon project specifics and circumstances. This Draft EIR is a Program EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 and assesses environmental impacts that could occur as a result of adoption of the Greenway. The purpose of this Draft EIR is to allow the County of Placer to evaluate program level impacts and consider programmatic mitigation measures. Per the CEQA Guidelines, subsequent activities in the program will require additional environmental review and will be evaluated to determine what type of additional environmental documentation is required.

Per the CEQA Guidelines, the purpose of this Draft EIR is to inform the public agency decision makers and the general public about the proposed project and its significant environmental effects, possible ways to minimize those significant effects, and to describe reasonable alternatives. It is not the intent of a Draft EIR to recommend either approval or denial of a project. The Draft EIR will be subject to a 45-day public review period. Written comments provided by the general public and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated comment period. Upon completion of the evaluation and comment period, a Final EIR will be prepared for review and consideration as part of the decision making process for the proposed project and for certification of compliance with CEQA by the County of Placer.

1.2 Environmental Review Process

CEQA applies to discretionary actions of public agencies. Section 15357 of the CEQA Guidelines describes a Discretionary Project as a project which requires the exercise of judgment when a public agency decides to approve or disapprove an activity. Placer County, as the agency that has the principal responsibility for approving and carrying out the proposed project, is the Lead Agency per CEQA Section 15051.

As part of the initial environmental review process for the proposed project, an Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) were circulated by Placer County from April 1, 2005 through May 2, 2005. An Initial Study is conducted by a public agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15063). According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064, an EIR shall be prepared for a project subject to CEQA when the Initial Study indicates there is substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. The NOP was circulated to inform responsible agencies and the public of the proposed project and to solicit comments on issues of concern to be evaluated in the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR will be subject to a 45-day public review period. Written comments provided by the general public and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated comment period. Written comments on the Draft EIR should be submitted to Placer County at the following address:

Placer County Planning Department
Attn: Christopher Schmidt
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 140
Auburn, CA 95603

Written comments received on the Draft EIR, and responses to comments, will be included in a Final EIR. The Final EIR will be considered by Placer County prior to approval or denial of the proposed project.

1.3 Focus, Scope, Organization and Content of the EIR

For purposes of function and clarity, this draft EIR has been divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1.0, Introduction**, provides information related to the purpose and intended uses of the EIR, the environmental review process, and the focus, scope, organization and content of the EIR.
- **Chapter 2.0, Executive Summary**, provides a brief overview of the proposed project, the environmental analysis of the proposed project, and a summary of the alternatives considered.
- **Chapter 3.0, Project Description**, provides the location and boundaries of the proposed project; a general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics.
- **Chapters 4.0 through 14.0** describe the potential for the proposed project to result in significant impacts. These chapters of the Draft EIR are organized by applicable environmental resources. As described in the Initial Study March 2005, the proposed project is not expected to result in significant impacts on energy resources or population and housing. The balance of the environmental evaluation in the Draft EIR is directed at the potential for the proposed project to result in significant impacts to land use, biological resources, cultural resources, visual resources, transportation and circulation, air quality, noise, soils/geology, hydrology/water quality, public services and utilities, and hazards & hazardous materials. This assessment of impacts considers the regulatory framework, environmental baseline conditions at the time of publication of the NOP, thresholds for significance recommended by CEQA and Placer County, and other relevant statutes and regulations, and the potential to reduce or avoid significant impacts.
- **Chapter 15.0, Other Discussions Required by CEQA**, includes the following discussions:
 - Project alternatives: describes reasonable alternatives to the proposed project or to the location of the project that would attain most of the basic objectives but would avoid or substantially reduce any of the significant effects of the project, including a "no project" alternative. Although not capable of meeting most of the basic objectives of the proposed project, the no project alternative was analyzed in accordance with the requirements of CEQA;
 - effects found not to be significant;
 - should the proposed project be implemented, any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided;
 - any significant irreversible environmental changes;
 - any irreversible commitments of resources that would be involved;

- any growth-inducing impacts, and
- cumulative impacts arising from the project.
- **Chapter 16.0, Report Preparers**, lists the persons and firms responsible for the preparation of the Draft EIR.
- **Chapter 17.0, References**.

1.4 Terminology Used in the EIR

This Draft EIR uses the following terminology to denote the environmental effects of the proposed project:

Less Than Significant Impact: An impact which does not result in a substantial and adverse change in the physical environment. This impact does not require the implementation of mitigation measures.

Potentially Significant Impact: An impact that may have a "substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15382). The existence of a potentially significant impact requires mitigation to be proposed that would reduce the magnitude of the potential impact.

Significant Impact: Substantial and adverse environmental change is likely to occur. A significant impact requires mitigation to reduce the magnitude of the impact.

Significant and Unavoidable Impact: Substantial and adverse environmental change is likely to occur. While mitigation may reduce the magnitude of the impact, there is no feasible mitigation that would mitigate the impact to less than significant.